

**TOWN/VILLAGE OF NORTHFIELD  
JOINT BOARD MEETING  
BOARD OF TOWN SELECTMEN  
BOARD OF VILLAGE TRUSTEES  
Minutes of March 25, 2013**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Select Board Chair John Quinn III, Selectmen Chris Bradley, Brad Denny, Matthew Gadbois, and Kenneth W. Goslant. Trustees Chair Kevin T. Beal, Trustees Colin T. Bright, Dennis Donahue, Stephen Fitzhugh, and K. David Maxwell. Also present were Town Manager Robert Lewis, Village Manager Jay Marcotte, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, James Baraw (Northfield Ambulance Supervisor), Pastor Trey Cates (New Life Community Church), and Kathleen Lott (*Northfield News*).

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

- II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** The Board members and the public were asked to rise and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

- III. SET/ADJUST AGENDA.** Manager Lewis noted that a previously scheduled "Public Participation" item has been cancelled due to non-attendance but another has been added (see below).

**IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**

- a. Pastor Trey Cates, New Life Community Church: Winter Parking Ban Suspension Request.** Pastor Trey Cates notified the Village Trustees that his church located at 29 East Street would be holding an evening service this coming Good Friday (03/29/13) that would last until sometime after 1:00 a.m. He therefore asked that the winter parking ban that would begin at midnight be lifted to accommodate his church attendees. He suggested that his parishioners could display identifying notices in their cars. Chair Beal thought that it probably would be best to just suspend the winter parking ban for everyone. Motion by Trustee Beal, seconded by Trustee Maxwell, to temporary suspend the winter parking ban in all of Northfield Village from midnight to 6:00 a.m. inclusive on the morning of Saturday, March 30, 2013. **Motion passed 5-0-0.** Chair Beal asked about the expected turnout for the church service. Pastor Cates said he was expecting somewhere between fifty (50) and one hundred (100) people.

**V. DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORT(S)**

- a. Northfield Ambulance Supervisor/Emergency Management Director James Baraw.** Superintendent Baraw had distributed a memorandum to the Boards that touched on a number of recent developments affecting the Northfield Ambulance Service (NAS). For example, since the voters at Town Meeting Day approved the purchase of a new ambulance unit, Superintendent Baraw now is looking into vehicle specifications and other facets of the upcoming bid process. He then discussed recent training for NAS members and how new federal and state requirements would affect the department. Regarding NAS staffing, Superintendent Baraw noted that his major concern is when Norwich University (NU) school year ends in May and about ten (10) NAS members leave Northfield for the summer months or permanently in the case of graduating seniors. He then stated that there are no major problems with NAS vehicles and that the ambulance unit slated for replacement is being treated "gingerly." Superintendent Baraw noted that the next statewide EMS Week will be in May 2013 and NAS again will head a gathering at the State House for all Vermont EMS members. He then discussed concerns regarding NU's recently expanded recreational paths on Paine Mountain, such as potential problems in reaching and extricating accident victims from the mountain. He added the summer camps in Roxbury often engage in hiking excursions on nearby hills and this also can create accessibility problems in case of accidents. Superintendent Baraw would like to discuss this with Town Manager Lewis in order to determine whether a new fee schedule should be developed to cover mountain extraction expenses. There also needs to be a discussion on the possible need for new off-road equipment. Finally, there were suggestions during the last budget process that NAS should expand both its membership and revenue. Superintendent Baraw now is working with Manager Lewis on various possibilities, such as increasing the number of non-emergency transfers.

Superintendent Baraw then reported that he is taking training courses in Williston this week that are funded by Homeland Security. This course will provide him with twenty-four (24) hours of emergency response training at no expense to the Town. Once he has completed the course, Superintendent Baraw will be able to set up drills for local natural and man-made disasters, evaluate the performance of the drills, etc.

Selectman Bradley asked if NAS separately tracked expenses involved with responses to accidents on Paine Mountain. Superintendent Baraw said that this was being done. He added that he has had discussions with NU on the possibility of purchasing shared equipment. Selectman Gadbois asked how often the off-trail rescue vehicle has been used. Superintendent Baraw estimated that it has been employed about fifty (50) times over the past ten (10) years. Selectman Gadbois would like to see some statistics included in future NAS reports indicating how many calls were taken since the last reporting date, how many patient transfers there were, etc. Superintendent Baraw stated that his next report would include this information.

Manager Lewis noted that the updated Basic Emergency Action Plan was included in the Board packets for review. He would like feedback from all Board members so that it can be formally approved at the next Joint Board Meeting.

Selectman Goslant asked about the status of the proposed combined Fire/Ambulance facility on Wall Street. Manager Lewis stated that he is still waiting for the engineering report from the NU students working on this proposal as a class project. This report should be ready soon. Selectman Goslant asked if there were any grant monies available for this project. Manager Lewis stated that the Select Board already has held the public hearing that was required before any grant application could be made. However, he is holding off on this until the engineering report has been received.

The Board members thanked Superintendent Baraw for his written report and his presentation tonight.

## **VI. JOINT DISCUSSION**

### **a. Town/Village Merger Transition Process.**

- 1. Merger Process Timeline.** Chair Beal noted that the Merger Committee, when drafting the Merger Plan, specified the major events in the Merger Process, such as the "Effective Date of Merger" (07/01/14); the period when the merged municipality would have a "Nine Member Board in Place" (July 2014 to March 2015); and the date of "Complete Merger" when the Board would revert back to five members (03/03/15). However, there would need to be additions to this timeline as merger approaches, including scheduling meetings to formulate a combined municipal budget, etc. Chair Quinn noted that Northfield's elected state representatives, Anne Donahue and Ann Lewis, already have submitted the Merger Plan to the Vermont House of Representatives for its approval. Village Manager Marcotte has contacted the Vermont Public Power Supply Authority (VPPSA) and received confirmation that it will provide their suggested budget for the Northfield Electric Department (NED) sooner than usual in order to accommodate the Town's earlier budget process. Manager Lewis stated that the Accounting Department will be looking into the effects of combining personnel expenses, equipment costs, etc. in advance of the effective merger date. Chair Beal wanted to assure Northfield residents and employees that there probably would not be significant changes in services provided or in personnel as a result of the municipal consolidation. Selectman Bradley stated that in addition to merged budgets, existing Town and Village ordinances would need to be reconciled where there are differences. Trustee Bright, who served on the Merger Committee, noted that the committee did look into this matter and prepared a summary of what had to be done. Copies of this summary will be in the next Board packets and discussed at the next Joint Board Meeting. Chair Beal noted that the Town and Village have distinct sewer ordinances that will need to be unified. Manager Marcotte felt that Utility Superintendent Patrick DeMasi should be included in this discussion. Selectman Denny wanted it emphasized that although the Town Selectmen and Village Trustees probably will hold more frequent joint meetings as the July 1, 2014 merger date approaches, the Town and Village will remain separate municipalities until that time.
- 2. Legal Issues Involving the Utility Departments.** Manager Marcotte stated that he also spoke to VPPSA about the NED's investment portfolios, long-term power purchases, etc. and how these would be affected by merger. He added that the legal firm that represents NED (Primmer Piper Eggleston & Cramer PC) has offered to meet with him, Finance Director Laurie Baroffio, and Utility Office Manager Doug Reed regarding these and other related issues. Selectman Denny noted that Attorney Paul Giuliani provided advice on utility matters to the Merger Committee and it was his legal opinion that the approved Merger Plan would become the charter for the combined municipality. It had been Attorney Giuliani's view that there would need to be no further legal action required for the transfer of Village assets to the combined municipality. Manager Lewis added that Attorney Giuliani has offered to work with the State Legislature while it considers approval of the Merger Plan.
- 3. Village Common Project.** Selectman Bradley asked if completion of the next phase of this project (the rehabilitation of the Village Common's north and west sides) is still planned for this year. Manager Marcotte stated that since needed easements are now in place and the project engineering nearly complete, we are anticipating that construction phase of the project will go out to bid this summer with actual construction to begin shortly after Labor Day (09/02/13). Construction is expected to take a couple of months so it should be finished by mid-November 2013. Selectman Gadbois asked if any work on East Street would be done this year. Trustee Bright stated that rehabilitation of East Street and an area of North Main Street are considered part of the third phase of this project; the work done this year is still considered Phase Two. Manager Marcotte noted that there would be "bump outs" that would improve pedestrian safety in the crosswalk leading from East Street to Depot Square.

Selectman Goslant is concerned about the impact of construction on Depot Square merchants. Chair Beal stated that Manager Marcotte and the Village Trustees have been working with Project Engineer Evan Detrick (DuBois & King) to minimize any disruption. Manager Marcotte suggested that Mr. Detrick could provide a project update to both Boards at the next Joint Board Meeting. Chair Beal noted that there will be a number of public discussions as this project moves toward completion.

- b. **Mad River Resource Management Alliance (MRRMA) Alternatives.** Manager Lewis stated that when MRRMA Administrator John Malter addressed the Select Board two weeks ago, the fate of the Moretown Landfill was still uncertain. Since then, the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) has ruled that the landfill would be shut down in the near future. Since one-third (⅓) of MRRMA's budget was funded by the operation of this landfill, Manager Lewis is concerned that Northfield's two dollar (\$2) per capita charge for being a MRRMA member community will rise significantly in the coming year. He recently spoke to the Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District (CVSWMD), to which Northfield belonged prior to joining MRRMA in July 2010, regarding its per capita membership charge. He was told that the current CVSWMD per capita rate is one dollar (\$1). It was noted that when Northfield voters authorized leaving CVSWMD for MRRMA, the CVSWMD was in bad financial condition and its per capita rate was over three dollars (\$3) and predicted to go higher. Manager Lewis admitted that this had been a preliminary investigation and he will do more research before bringing forth any formal proposal. Trustee Bright stated that there appeared to be a lot of uncertainty now regarding the future of solid waste management in Vermont; he suggested that it might be best to hold off on any further action until the situation clarifies. It was noted that CVSWMD has been sending its waste to Vermont's only other operating landfill in Coventry. Selectman Bradley agreed that more information was needed before Northfield considered changing its waste management district again. Manager Lewis noted that there is no specific timeline for action so this is a good time to gather more information. He confirmed that a public vote would be required before leaving MRRMA and rejoining CVSWMD. Chair Quinn suggested that this matter can be discussed again at a future Joint Board Meeting when more information is available.
- c. **Norwich University Request to Lift Parking Ban for NU 101 Open House.** Mike Abraham, the NU Chief of Security, has requested that the Boards ease the parking bans on the Crescent and Central Street on Saturday, April 6, 2013, in order to accommodate overflow parking for the NU 101 Open House. Motion by Selectman Denny, seconded by Selectman Bradley, to lift the parking ban on the Town part of the Crescent. **Motion passed 5-0-0.** Motion by Trustee Donahue, seconded by Trustee Maxwell, to lift the parking ban on the Village part of the Crescent as well as on Central Street. **Motion passed 5-0-0.** It was noted that the letter that will be sent to NU regarding the Boards' decision will include a request to work with the Northfield Emergency Services and Highway Department to prevent any threat to public safety or any inconvenience to the travelling public.

#### VII. LIQUOR CONTROL COMMISSION

- a. **Liquor License Renewal Applications**
  - 1. **American Legion.** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the liquor license renewal application. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
  - 2. **Cumberland Farms.** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the liquor license renewal application. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
  - 3. **Knotty Shamrock.** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the liquor license renewal application. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
  - 4. **Northfield Country Club.** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the liquor license renewal application. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Tobacco License Renewal Applications**
  - 1. **American Legion.** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Gadbois, to approve the tobacco license renewal application. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
  - 2. **Cumberland Farms.** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Gadbois, to approve the tobacco license renewal application. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

#### VIII. BOARD OF TOWN SELECTMEN

- a. **Approval of Minutes: March 11, 2013 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Denny, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Approval of Bills: Warrant #19-13.** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Denny, to approve Warrant #19-13 in the amount of \$44,513.33. Selectman Gadbois stated that this warrant included a lot of phone bill payments. Manager Lewis stated that the Town pays for both cell phones and landlines and payments were further broken down by the various departments. Manager Marcotte added that he has been working with Manager Lewis and Finance Director Baroffio on a new TDS Telecom phone plan that should reduce some expense.

Selectman Gadbois asked if the purchasing policy was followed when personal protection equipment was bought for the Fire Department recently. Manager Lewis stated that it was not because this was specialized equipment and the purchase was funded by the sale of the old aerial ladder truck. Under normal conditions a CIP account would have been established for this purchase but Manager Lewis felt that this additional step was unnecessary. After some additional discussion, Manager Lewis said he would seek better compliance to the purchasing policy in the future. Selectman Goslant said he had faith that Manager Lewis will do so. He then asked about an engineering expense for the Fairground Bridge replacement. Manager Lewis confirmed that FEMA would be reimbursing this payment. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

- c. **Approval of Bi-Weekly Payroll through March 17, 2013: \$48,748.54.** Motion by Selectman Bradley, seconded by Selectman Denny, to approve the bi-weekly payroll in the amount of \$48,748.54. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

- d. **Appointment of Various Town Officials.** A list of the appointed Northfield Town positions that would expire at the end of this month had been advertised. Letters of interest had been received for some but not all of the positions listed below.

1. **Conservation Commission (two vacant positions).** There was no interest expressed in these positions. These vacancies will be re-advertised.
2. **Planning Commission (one vacant position).** Motion by Selectman Denny seconded by Selectman Bradley, to reappoint Steven Jeffrey for an additional four (4) year term. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
3. **Recreation Committee (two vacant positions).** There was no interest expressed in these positions. These vacancies will be re-advertised.
4. **Zoning Board of Adjustment (one vacant position).** Motion by Selectman Denny seconded by Selectman Bradley, to reappoint Leslie Skinner for an additional five (5) year term. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
5. **First Constable.** Motion by Selectman Denny, seconded by Selectman Bradley, to reappoint Charles Satterfield. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
6. **Town Service Officer.** Motion by Selectman Denny, seconded by Selectman Bradley, to reappoint Mark Podgwaite. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
7. **Tree Warden.** Motion by Selectman Denny, seconded by Selectman Bradley, to reappoint Russ Barrett. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
8. **Fence Viewer (three positions).** Motion by Selectman Denny, seconded by Selectman Bradley, to reappoint Patrick DeMasi and to appoint Colin Bright and Dennis Donahue. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
9. **Inspector of Wood, Shingles.** Motion by Selectman Denny, seconded by Selectman Bradley, to reappoint Patrick DeMasi. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
10. **Weigher of Coal.** Motion by Selectman Denny, seconded by Selectman Bradley, to reappoint Patrick DeMasi. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
11. **Mad River Resource Management Alliance (MRRMA) Representatives.** There was no interest expressed in the MRRMA Representative or MRRMA Alternate Representative positions. These vacancies will be re-advertised.
12. **Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) Representatives.** There was no interest expressed in the CVRPC Representative or CVRPC Alternate Representative positions. These vacancies will be re-advertised.
13. **Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) Transportation Advisory Committee Representatives.** Motion by Selectman Denny, seconded by Selectman Bradley, to appoint Leslie Matthews. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

- e. **Status Reports: Various Projects**

1. **Economic Development Committee.** Selectman Bradley would like to schedule a committee meeting in the near future. A possible discussion topic would be the proposed renovation of the Tops/Grand Union grocery store and how the Town might help the company through a tax stabilization agreement.
2. **Green Mountain Transit Agency (GMTA) Public Hearing.** Chair Quinn noted that GMTA will be holding a public hearing at the Northfield Senior Center (168 Wall Street) at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, April 8, 2013, in order to "discuss and receive public input on the proposed Northfield Commuter route plan."
3. **Pedestrian Crosswalks.** Selectman Goslant is concerned about the safety of Northfield's crosswalks, not only near the Village Common but also those located by Norwich University. He would like to see pedestrian barrels placed in the middle of the crosswalks in order to slow down traffic.

**IX. BOARD OF VILLAGE TRUSTEES**

- a. **Approval of Minutes: March 12, 2013 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Trustee Donahue, seconded by Trustee Maxwell, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 3-0-2, with Trustees Bright and Fitzhugh abstaining.**
- b. **Approval of Bills: Warrant #19-13.** Motion by Trustee Donahue, seconded by Trustee Bright, to approve Warrant #19-13 in the amount of \$101,861.12. Trustee Maxwell asked which traffic light had been upgraded. Manager Marcotte confirmed that it was the one at the intersection of North Main Street and Vine Street. Trustee Maxwell inquired about a refund payment to Prescott Tower Services. Manager Marcotte will check on this and report back. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- c. **Village Common Rehabilitation Project update.** This matter had been discussed earlier in the meeting (see above). Manager Marcotte now added that he spoke to Mr. Detrick about possible private funding of the burying of telecommunication lines on the west side of the Common. Manager Marcotte will provide more information on this at a future meeting.
- d. **Streetlight Replacement Project update.** Manager Marcotte stated that he is still waiting for solid numbers for LED fixture purchases as well as for installation costs. Based upon the best estimates to date, we are now looking at total project costs of \$290,000 rather than \$335,000. He added that the new figure does not include the cash rebates that the Village will be receiving for the changeover to the more energy-efficient LED lighting. Selectman Gadbois noted that Northfield Falls residents had asked for improved lighting in their neighborhood; would this project address this concern? Manager Lewis has discussed this with Manager Marcotte and he confirmed that some new lights would be installed in the Falls while some existing fixtures would be upgraded.
- e. **Smart Grid Project update.** Trustee Fitzhugh stated that this project remains on schedule for completion by the April 15, 2013 deadline. There might be a slight delay in obtaining radio licenses for some of the new radio-controlled units. Next week new switches will be installed at the King Street Substation and SCADA will be installed at the NU Substation.
- f. **Status Reports: Various Projects**
  1. **Pedestrian Crossing at Railroad Tracks.** Trustee Bright asked if there have been any new developments regarding the damaged pedestrian crossing near the railroad tracks by the Fernandez Hardware Store. Chair Beal has received some information from Senator Bernie Sanders' office on who to contact in order to get some action. We are just looking for the pathway to be restored to its original condition.

**X. MANAGERS' REPORTS**

- a. **Vermont Routes 12 and 12A Paving.** Village Manager Marcotte reported that he would be meeting with some Vermont Agency of Transportation (AOT) representatives later this week regarding the paving project scheduled for later this spring. The paver hired by AOT, Pike Industries, will begin grinding the road next month and paving will commence by the Grand Union sometime in May.
- b. **Town Road and Bridge Standards.** As indicated in his written report, Manager Lewis has put approval of this new policy on hold until he has confirmed that its stipulations will conform to FEMA standards.
- c. **VOSHA Infractions.** Manager Lewis is working with the Vermont Department of Labor in trying to get the fines reduced for the violations cited during the last inspection of the Town Garage. The two remaining items of dispute involve two electric outlets with damaged covers. The current penalty for each is \$2100.

**XI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Non-agenda items.** There was none.

**XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION.** Without objection, the Town Selectmen and Village Trustees went into executive session, in accordance with 1 VSA 313 (a)(1), in order to discuss a personnel matter without Manager Lewis or Manager Marcotte present.

The Boards went into executive session at 8:30 p.m.

Without objection, the Boards came out of executive session at 8:55 p.m. No action was taken.

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT.** Without objection, the Boards adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Kenneth L. McCann*

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

These minutes are subject to approval at the next regular meetings.

An audio recording of this meeting is available in the Town Manager's Office.